

Former Police Chief Will Face Child Porn Charges

by Casey Donahue Police & Fire 6 hours ago

MOUNT PLEASANT, N.Y. -- Former Mount Pleasant Police Chief Brian Fanelli will appear in court Wednesday to face child pornography charges.

Fanelli was arrested in late January by the Department of Homeland Security after prosecutors said that he had more than 100 files of child pornography on his home computer. Fanelli was arrested at his home in Mahopac and arraigned in the White Plains federal court, where he did not enter a plea. He was released on a \$50,000 bail and confined to house arrest.

If convicted, Fanelli could face up to 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

According to the complaint filed against Fanelli by Homeland Security Investigations, he used a Peer-to-Peer file sharing program to download 126 files containing pornographic images of children as young as 7 years old.

Investigators began tracking his computer in November, and executed a search warrant on his house on Jan. 23. Fanelli, who taught sexual abuse awareness classes to elementary and middle school students, told the arresting officers that he initially began downloading the images as research for his classes, but eventually developed a personal interest in them.

Fanelli joined the Mount Pleasant Police Department in 1981, and was appointed chief in November. As a lieutenant, one of his duties was to keep track of sex offenders living in the town. He was placed on suspension by the town following his arrest, and the Town Board unanimously approved the appointment of Lt. Paul Oliva Jr. as acting chief.

Fanelli also taught catechism classes for many years at the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Shrub Oak. Following his arrest he was removed from his teaching position, according to the church.